

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HONOURABLE HOWARD
YAWA, MPL DELIVERED AT THE MODIMOLA EPWP LEARNER
CONTRACTORS AND LEARNER FARMERS' GRADUATION
FUNCTION HELD AT THE MAFIKENG HOTEL SCHOOL ON
WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST 2006**

Programme Directors

The Executive Mayor of the Central District Council-Honourable
Councillor Themba Gwabeni

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works-
Honourable Fezile Bhengu

Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Works-Hon
Mahlakeng Mahlakeng

Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works
in the National Assembly

Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Public Works
in the Provincial Legislature

Councillors of the Barolong Boo-Ratshidi Traditional Council

Heads of Departments

Honourable Councillors

Senior Government Officials

Distinguished Guests

Graduates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Jose Marti once penned these words, "Man has no freedom to
watch impassively the slavery and dishonour of fellow men, nor
their struggles for freedom and honour".

This instructive remark by the great Cuban revolutionary poet in a nutshell captures the challenge that faces most of rural communities as a result of inherited infrastructure backlog and apartheid deprivation. The challenge is poverty and underdevelopment. Indeed as Jose Marti, reflected, we cannot as patriots, turn a blind eye or watch from the sidelines as our compatriots continue to suffer the degradation of not having access to water, electricity and basic infrastructure.

The Expanded Public Works Programme launched by President Thabo Mbeki on 18 May 2004, is one of the many government initiatives aimed at creating work opportunities and improving the skills levels of our people. Its core objectives are job creation, skills development and improved social services.

An important element of the programme is a large-scale expansion of the use of labour -intensive construction methods to build, upgrade and maintain the social and economic infrastructure in all the underdeveloped rural and urban areas of our country and province that do not have such infrastructure. The programme is aimed at workers and the unemployed, particularly those who are marginalised from the mainstream of our economy.

Indeed before the launch of the Modimola Expanded Public Works Project on the 16 September 2004, many unemployed rural villagers in the impoverished village went to sleep with hunger

pangs. To them the next day had only one purpose, that is to find food, to survive and to have some energy.

Four hundred and ninety two (492) beneficiaries from Modimola Village who previously had no hope of participation in the economy have in the past two years realised their opportunity to participate in the implementation of a People's Contract to create work and fight poverty. The beneficiaries received training road construction, brickmaking, plastering, financial management and lifeskills.

In addition, sixteen (16) learner Contractors were selected and participated in the NQF Level 2 Construction Contracting Learnership Programme offered by the Construction Industry Education and Training Services (CIETS). Their theoretical training included survey techniques, implementation of environmental initiatives and various labour intensive construction methods, Business and Construction Management, Site, Health and Safety Management, Administration and Quality Control.

On completion of theoretical training, the young learner contractors who all fall in the Youth category implemented the following projects as part of their practical training:

- Five contracts to the value of R450 000 each for Road repairs and maintenance covering 71 kilometres between Mafikeng and Setlagole. The work included grass

cutting, cleaning of culverts, fencing and edge repairs. The work was done over a period of eight months

- Five Village Roads Construction Contracts to the value of R600 000 each for construction of 8 kilometers of roads in the villages of Modimola and 3,5 kilometers in Madibe Makgabana. The roads were constructed to improve access into the villages, to schools and to clinics.
- Three contracts to the value of R350 000 for Route Patrols covering a total length of 220 kilometres between Mafikeng and Taung. The work included the chasing of stray animals in the road reserve, reporting damaged fence lines, reporting road accidents etc. The work was done over a period of six months and contributed significantly towards reduction of accidents on the road between Mafikeng and Taung.
- Two Modimola farm Infrastructure Development Contracts to the value of R2 million on 15 hectares farm for the thirty learner farmers. Each of the farmers to farm on half a hectare. The work was done over a period of 9 months.
- One structures Construction Contract to the value of R450 000 for the construction of major storm water structures along the village road constructed in Modimola. The work was done over a period of 11 months.

The Age of Hope has through the Expanded Public Works Programme opened opportunities for women. As part of bridging the gap between the first and the second economy, the programme has also afforded women opportunities to venture into agriculture. Twenty-two of the thirty of the learner farmers

who participated in the NQF level 1 Farming Learnership offered by the Agriseta were women. They were trained by Taletso College in mix farming, plant production and maintenance, pest control, applied business in agriculture, applied business in agriculture, mathematics and communication.

While my Department funds Project Management through Africon, the contribution of the following partners thus far need to be appreciated :

- The Honourable Premier for her visionary leadership, guidance and support
- Colleagues in the Executive and in the Economic Development and Infrastructure Cluster for corporate governance ,support and encouragement
- The Portfolio Committee on Public Works and the Standing Committee in the Provincial legislature for their unwavering support
- The Department of Transport ,Roads and Community Safety funding for route patrol contracts, road maintenance and road construction in Madibe Makgabana Village.
- The Department of Agriculture ,Conservation and Environment for mentoring and logistical support for learner farmers through Africon
- The Central District Municipality for funding Road Construction and storm Water structures in Modimola Village.

- Africon for overall technical, logistical, mentoring and administrative support to the learner contractors. That this Project received a gold award in the 2005 Premier's Public Service Excellence Award is through your professionalism and commitment as a partner in infrastructure development.
- Taletso College for theoretical and practical training
- The Construction Industry Education and Training Services for theoretical, practical training and assessment of learner contractors

We are encouraged by the determination of the learner contractors to succeed. All of us as individuals and collectively can make a difference and should contribute to give new content to our Age of Hope. Through our collective effort we can make poverty history. The time is always ripe to do right.

In Conclusion I wish to echo the President's words that, it is up to all of us, through our national effort, to do all the things that will ensure that the mountains and the hills of our country break forth into singing before all our people, and the trees of the field clap their hands to applaud the people's season of joy.

Ke a leboga.